

# MOUT Battle Drills

## For Infantry and Tanks

CAPTAIN DOUGLAS STEWART

Conducting military operations in urban terrain (MOUT) is considered the infantryman's job, but an infantry force can suffer high casualties in prolonged house-to-house fighting. Several combat multipliers can be used to help the attackers accomplish their mission with fewer casualties. Operation JUST CAUSE in Panama (December 1989) demonstrated the value of armor, military police, and even psychological operations during fighting in Panama City.

The employment of indirect fire is often very restricted by the close-in nature of the combat and the need to prevent collateral damage. Infantry commanders must therefore use other combined arms assets as effectively as possible. Unfortunately, infantry and armor units rarely have an opportunity to train together in urban terrain.

During a MOUT exercise in Berlin, infantrymen trained with M1A1 Abrams

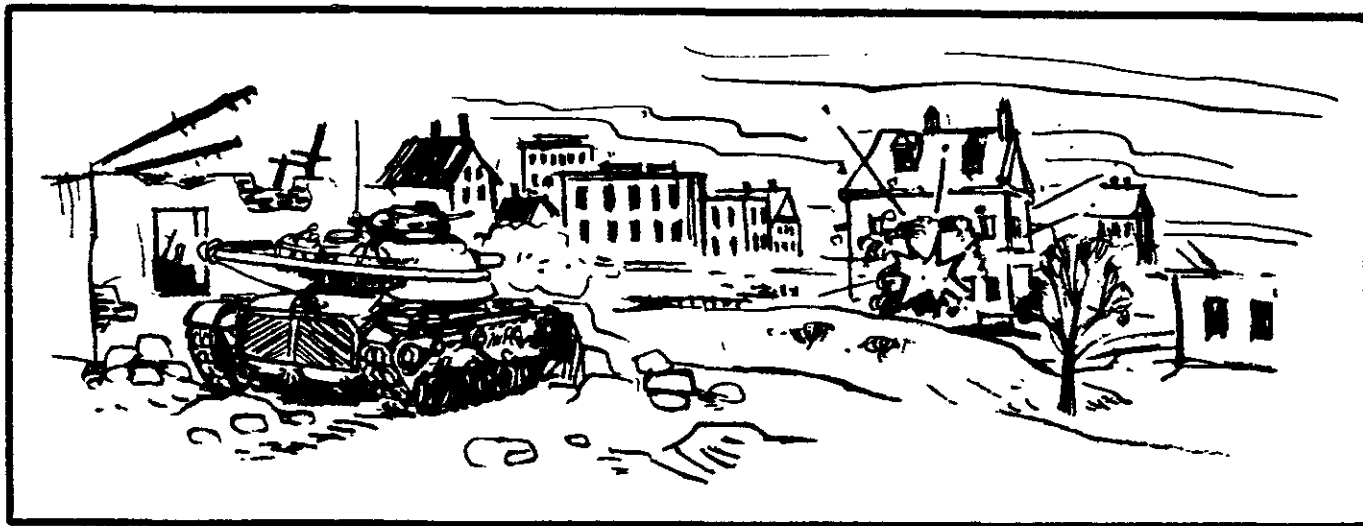
tanks, and the combination proved effective against a defending aggressor infantry unit. Two armor companies and an infantry company trained together in platoon-sized elements to determine how armor and infantry could best be integrated in an urban environment. The opposing force (OPFOR) operated in squad and platoon-size elements using antiarmor weapons and limited Class IV barrier materials. Controllers on both sides ensured that the effects of mines, M1A1 tank weapons, and antiarmor systems were realistic. Both sides used Multiple Integrated Laser Engagement System (MILES) equipment and standard rules of engagement. To avoid collateral damage, indirect fires on both sides were limited primarily to mortar systems and smoke.

Eight different squad and platoon exercises were conducted each day for a week to allow the armor and infantry

soldiers to gain experience and develop battle drills. Four simple battle drills that came out of this exercise will help tanks and infantry fight effectively in close-in urban combat:

**Crossing Danger Areas.** The OPFOR—learning quickly that smoke grenades are thrown when friendly soldiers are preparing to cross a street or alley—automatically shoot through the smoke when it is deployed.

**DRILL:** The infantry squad occupies rooms adjacent to the crossing point. A tank is called up to the rear of the building. Then the infantrymen throw smoke grenades to draw enemy fire, but they do not cross the gap. The tank uses its thermal sights to engage the enemy through the smoke with its coaxial machinegun or main gun. The infantrymen then throw a second set of smoke grenades, preferably HC (hydrogen chloride), and cross the danger area while



the tank overwatches the crossing. (Time: Three to seven minutes. Sequence: Smoke, Draw Fire, Suppress with Tank, Smoke, Cross.)

#### Establishing a Foothold (Figure 1).

In the hasty defense of most urban sites, the enemy is usually unable or unwilling to surround himself with obstacles and barriers. As a result, in the rapid pace of modern combat, friendly forces are likely to bypass such areas. Despite the heat from the M1A1 tank exhaust, an infantry squad can follow three to four meters behind a tank, concealed by the smoke from the tank's smoke system. One tank can cover two squads with its smoke, depending on wind speed and direction. The quiet M1A1 engine allows the tank to approach an urban area undetected while the enemy's attention is focused elsewhere, or while the enemy is being suppressed by indirect fire.

Once a thorough reconnaissance has determined the best avenue of approach with the fewest obstacles to be breached, the following drill can be used to cross a wide danger area to establish a foothold.

**DRILL:** The first tank section moves to overwatching positions that cover the objective without being in line with the intended infantry route of advance. The tanks use smoke and reconnaissance by fire with their machineguns to draw enemy attention. One or two tanks from the second section can lead the infantry along the axis of advance up to the first obstacles or the first building. If the enemy engages the infantry, a tank can instantly use white phosphorus grenades to its front and cover the infantry with its smoke generator to the rear while the infantry takes cover. The infantry can then approach the breach point along the flank of the tank using individual movement techniques. Caution: Once the smoke is generated, the tank must never back up until the infantry leader notifies the tank commander that he is clear to do so. This technique was used in our exercise to cross a 500-meter gap without casualties. (Time: Three minutes.)

**Breaching an Obstacle.** The most common drill in which an infantry squad can greatly assist armor is known as

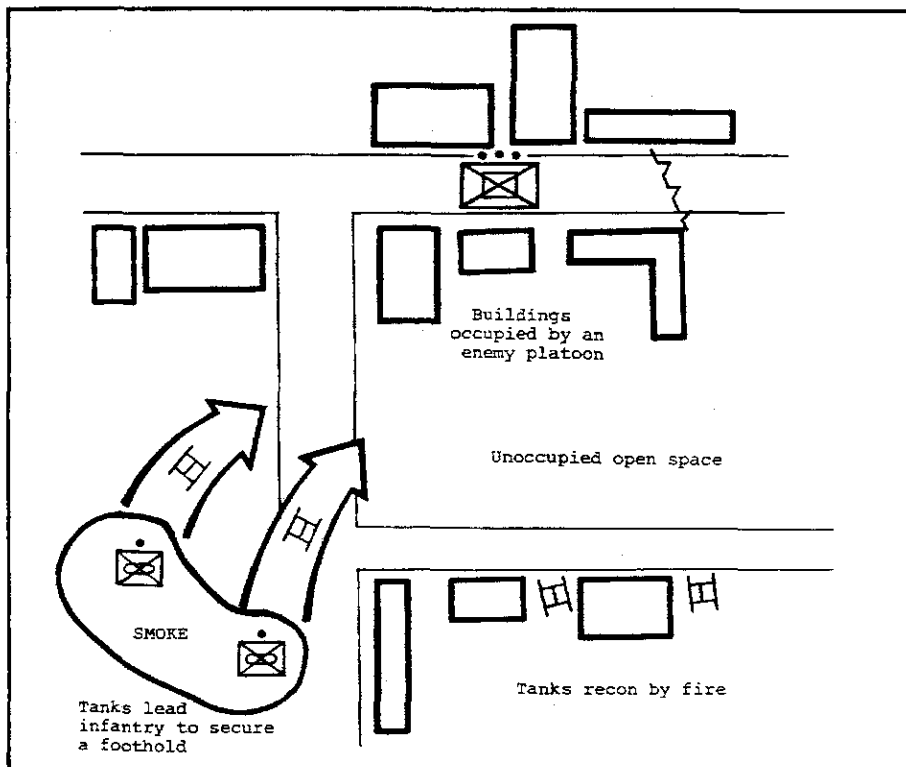


Figure 1. Establishing a foothold.

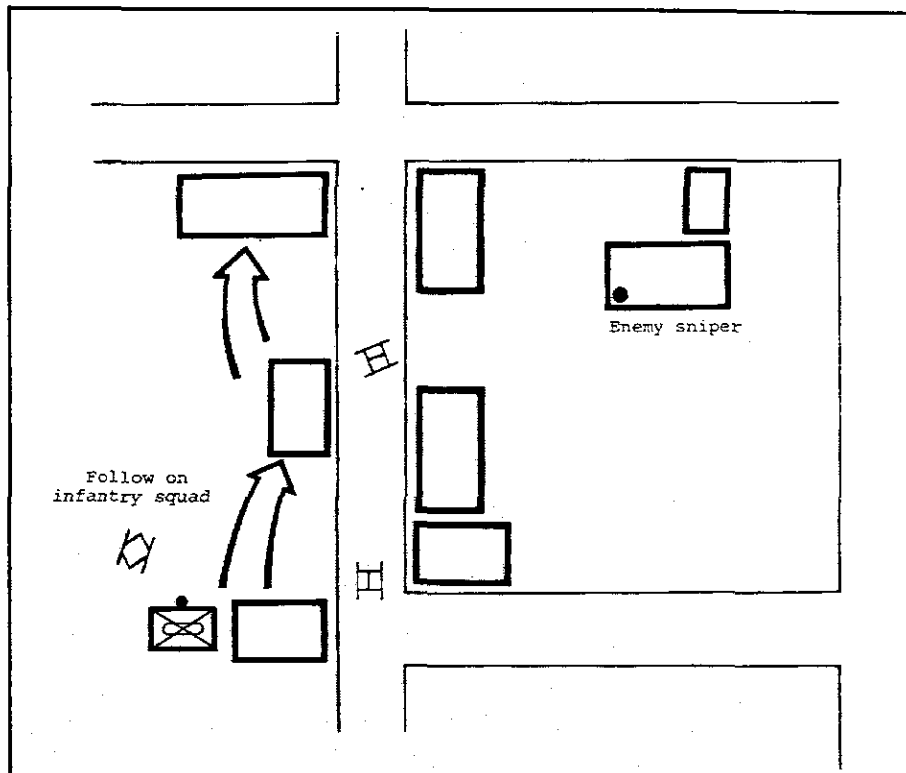


Figure 2. Street movement.

“Pop and Drop.” This drill can be varied to include complex obstacles with both antitank and antipersonnel mines and wire. Because most of these obstacles are

covered by fire, the drill requires thorough rehearsal, and the speed of the breaching element is critical. Also critical are the preparation of the explosives and

the hooks and lines, and the way they are carried by the infantry or the tanks. Carrying the explosives on the tank can be dangerous, and they are hard to get to when needed. Also, the infantrymen must know how wide the lane must be and how to mark it so the tank's crew can see it while the hatch is closed. Several infrared chemical lights or a specific color of smoke may be used as markers. If the infantrymen know how to connect the tow line properly, the tank can easily pull out a triple-strand wire obstacle.

**DRILL:** When the obstacle is detected, the tanks are brought forward as close as possible into overwatch positions. An initial burst of smoke is used to draw enemy fire (as in the first drill), and the tank often destroys or suppresses the enemy soldiers covering the obstacle. The rear element of the infantry squad quickly unpacks the pre-set charges and brings them forward. The infantry leader then selects a breach point that is wide enough for the tanks to maneuver through. At his command, the tanks can secure the breach point and obscure it while the infantry soldiers set the charges on the mines. Once the charges are blown, more smoke may be required

while the tow line is connected from the wire to the nearest tank. As the tank withdraws rapidly, it easily pulls the wire apart, and a squad or fire team rushes through the gap to secure and mark the far side. Still more smoke may be required from the infantry to cover these operations. (Time: Five to eight minutes.)

**Street Movement (Figure 2).** Often in an urban environment, an enemy sniper or team can infiltrate to the rear of advancing friendly forces, causing a great deal of confusion and numerous casualties in the follow-on units. Because these teams usually carry only small arms that cannot penetrate the skirts of the M1A1, the tank can be used to guard the advance of the follow-on squads moving forward along a previously secured route that is now jeopardized by the enemy counterattack. In addition, in urban warfare every infantry unit must conserve or replenish its supply of smoke, which can be depleted in one or two street crossings.

**DRILL:** The infantry squad identifies the general direction of the enemy and takes cover. The squad leader then calls the tank up into position between his element and the enemy. The squad leader

clears the tank to engage any enemy at will as it slowly moves down the street parallel to the infantry's axis of advance. The infantry can then move from building to building in a crouch or high-crawl without smoke, provided they directly parallel the route of the tank. The tank's movement is best coordinated by radio from the infantry squad leader. A tank can cover one squad at a time.

Although these four drills were used with M1A1 tanks in the Berlin exercise, they could be just as effective with infantry fighting vehicles or any armor system that has coaxial weapons and thermal sights. Most of these drills can also be used in a mobile defense or a counterattack.

The effects of armor and infantry together proved very useful at the small-unit level in urban terrain and with combined arms rehearsals, the battle drills can be effective techniques for rapidly defeating an enemy.

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# Physical Fitness In the Reserve Components

**MASTER SERGEANT MICHAEL L. COLLIS**

The readiness of any unit begins with the physical fitness of the individual soldiers and their leaders. Army National Guard and Army Reserve units have always struggled to establish programs that encourage soldiers to maintain their physical fitness through individual, voluntary physical fitness activities. The goal of such programs is for the sol-

diers to meet the standards set forth in FM 21-20, *Physical Fitness Training*, and to pass the Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT) each year.

But a meaningful physical fitness program cannot be executed in just the two days a month during a drill period. Commanders and leaders must therefore emphasize to their soldiers the importance

of establishing their own personal fitness programs and working at them throughout the month.

There are many ways to motivate soldiers to develop such programs: Some trainers insist that positive reinforcement is the best way. Others say that education will change attitudes. Still others take the old-fashioned approach that the carrot